



April 2, 2009

The Honorable Lamar Smith
U. S. House of Representatives
2409 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Smith:

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Lower Colorado River Basin Flood Feasibility Study. Due to your efforts, the Lower Colorado River Authority, along with local communities, has been able to work successfully with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to help protect homes, businesses, and communities from possible flooding along the lower Colorado River basin.

The purpose of this letter is to seek your support for a Fiscal Year 2010 appropriation of \$700,000 to the Lower Colorado River Basin Flood Study through the Corps of Engineers General Investigations account. These funds will be used to complete the Highland Lakes feasibility study. This study includes the review of floodgate operations for Mansfield Dam on Lake Travis to determine whether they are still protective of affected property from potential flood damages. Currently the dam is operated by Corps of Engineers rules that were adopted in 1978. Since that time, new information and models have been developed to provide a better idea of potential flood damages and the effectiveness of the current rules. With the new information gained from the study, any needed changes in gate operations could help to significantly reduce flooding around the Highland Lakes and in the lower Colorado River basin. Funds would also be used to continue flood studies in Bastrop and Hays counties.

As you know, communities in the Colorado River Basin continue to experience devastating floods. During the 1990s alone, there were 39 flood events in the lower Colorado River basin, four of which resulted in Presidential disaster declarations. These floods caused \$44 million in damages and 11 flood-related deaths. In response to these devastating events, 45 local communities have joined together to form the Texas Colorado River Floodplain Coalition. To date, studies estimate that the worst possible flood event could damage almost 34,000 structures and result in almost \$2 billion in damage throughout the basin. If we are successful in obtaining the requested funding, we would not only have a much better understanding of the effects of such an event, but also be in a position to initiate the construction of infrastructure projects that will help to minimize the damage. The Texas Colorado River Floodplain Coalition supports the study and is pleased with its progress in addressing members' concerns.

The Honorable Lamar Smith
April 2, 2009
Page 2

It is crucial that we provide communities along the river basin with accurate information so that they may begin to evaluate the most effective flood control alternatives to protect their homes and businesses. The local communities are all very encouraged by the progress of the Lower Colorado River Basin Flood Control Study and understand that our success has been possible due, in no small part, to your efforts.

Again, thank you for your consideration of this important FY 2010 request. If you have any questions about this project, please do not hesitate to contact me at 1-800-776-5272, ext. 3283, or (512) 473-3283.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Mason", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Thomas Mason
General Manager